



The Phoenix Family Readiness Group Newsletter
1st Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division (M)
Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07



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Above: Our leadership just before conducting pre-combat inspections of the soldiers and equipment.

Happy New Year from Camp Taji, Iraq! The Phoenix Battalion has traveled far by land and air and finally set up shop at our new “home.” We’ll never feel quite at home here on foreign land, but for the meantime, we’ve carved our place in Iraqi soil.

While the majority of the battalion flew to Taji, some lucky soldiers drove on a long convoy. Despite the long tiring ride, they arrived in country eager to start their mission. As the 3rd ID moves out, the 4th ID is taking over battle space and preparing to train Iraqi soldiers so that they will one day defend their own land.

Though the days are long and our work is taxing, the rewards are great. Smiles and grateful words from the Iraqi people reassure us everyday that we’re serving a noble and patriotic cause for this country and our own. Thank you again for all your love and support. We miss you all!

Alpha

Greetings and Happy New Year from Camp Taji, Iraq. We have finally arrived, and although we truly miss you all, it is comforting to finally have a “home”, rather than living out of a duffel bag. The company is currently undergoing our transition with the 245th MI Company of the Oklahoma Army National Guard. Things are running smoothly as our platoons and sections are quickly bringing our systems into operation and assuming the mission.

For those of you with loved ones from OIF 1, I must admit that our living conditions and amenities have dramatically improved. To answer a question that often worries my wife, we are eating and sleeping quite well. The food is excellent, and there is certainly never a shortage. Sleeping in a bed is also a welcome change from previous deployments. Although Taji is an incredibly large camp, most things are within a moderate walking distance. However, the recent rains have made for some interesting walks sloshing through the mud.



Above: Camels strolling through the desert.

As always, I thank you for your love and support. Although the mission here is

often difficult and stressful, having your support makes us stronger as individuals and as a team. I look forward to the day where we can all meet again in person, yet we must first complete our mission. Just as we remain in your prayers, know that you are in ours as you continue to protect the home front. God Bless!

CPT Clay Bell
Nighthawk 6

Bravo

Bravo Company Soldiers continue to impact Operation Iraqi Freedom. Everyone is working hard to support the Brigade's mission and to take care of each other. In the last two weeks the Company has accomplished a significant amount of Signal and tactical work. At the same time, they've enjoyed some amenities due to the hard work of our Supply Sergeant. The FOB has a small PX, a phone center and some other comforts of home.

We continue to maintain physical fitness training and other routine Army training. SSG Robinson re-enlisted in January and continues to contribute to our success. The esprit-de-corps has never been better. The team has helped one another in everything from burying cable to moving furniture. More hard work lies ahead, but Bravo Company remains motivated and fit to fight.

HHD

Greetings from Taji! The Renegades are in place and settling in at Camp Taji. Living conditions are much better than during Operation Iraqi Freedom I. Each Soldier lives in a "pod" about the size of a small camper trailer. We have either a room to ourselves or one roommate. The rooms were furnished to varying degrees, but the Renegades have acquired stuff and most of us have a bed, wardrobe, nightstand, and sometimes even a lamp or a chair. The rooms come with power (220 volt) and

heat/ac. The PX complex has half a dozen fast food venues, but the mess hall is free and has a pretty good spread four times a day. All in all, it's not bad living.

We've started to train with the unit we're replacing and we'll be taking over the sector soon. The company command post has an internet café so your Soldier can keep in touch. I also encourage Soldiers to write home since the postage is free. I know they would like to hear from you as well. Our mailing address is:

Name of Soldier
HHD, 1STB, 1BCT, 4ID
Unit 50001
APO AE 09378

It will be a hard year to be apart from our loved ones, but we are taking good care of each other here.

Renegade 6



Above: PVT Johnson standing by in his vehicle for a pre-combat inspection.

HHC

The Raven soldiers have arrived in Iraq and are beginning their long awaited mission to begin assisting the Iraqi people on their path toward freedom. We are currently conducting right seat rides with the units we are relieving and are learning what it takes to take over their assigned missions.

Our soldiers are beginning to familiarize themselves with the area outside of Camp Taji. I have personally had the chance to visit with some of the locals living around the camp and have found their reception welcoming.

Our living conditions have vastly improved from what I remember from my previous tour. The chow is great, and the PX sells just about everything you don't need (*joke*). We have an actual building and office space that we are using for our company command post. Our living quarters are well equipped and we even have a laundry service that washes and folds our laundry for free.

Our soldiers are extremely motivated and highly trained. In a short time, we will say goodbye to the units we are replacing. We are ready and prepared for the missions ahead. The soldiers wanted me to remind you all that we love to receive letters, so don't hesitate to drop a line. *Ravens...Live with Honor.*

PHOENIX 6

Greetings from Iraq. The Phoenix Battalion continues to build on the success we displayed at the National Training Center in September and the very successful training we accomplished in Kuwait. Your soldiers are doing well and morale remains high. We are taking over a very diverse and sometimes complicated mission and the hours have been long and hard for most of the battalion's soldiers. Moving the battalion is like moving your family; there is stuff to unpack, phone and computer lines to set up, area familiarization, and a general settling in of people to new surroundings. Just like when you PCS, there is often a lot of stress, long hours, and adjustments. As we settle into somewhat of a routine and get used to our new missions, our soldiers will have more personal time. Please continue to write, email, and send packages to your

soldier. Contact from home is often a welcome relief from the day to day stress of operating in a combat zone.

LTC John W. Cross Phoenix 6



Above: LTC Cross addressing the battalion before movement north.

Newsletter Access

These Newsletters are accessible via the 4th Infantry Division website. To access the Battalion webpage with links to Battalion history, the FRG page and information about the Battalion's Crest /Insignia, Mission and contact information. Go to www.hood.army.mil, on the right under Major Unit's click on 4th Infantry Division, once you are at the Division webpage, click on Units, then 1st Brigade and 1st STB at the bottom. This will allow you access to all of the Battalion's links.



To Dare Is To Do

Larry A. Seaman
Command Sergeant Major
U.S. Army

John W. Cross
LTC, EN
Commanding

